



News Release

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Utah Department of Health to Broadcast Bioterrorism Preparedness Documentary *Program Shows Utahns what they can do to Prepare*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – In January of 2004 a truck driver staggered into the emergency room of Pioneer Valley Hospital. With his face covered in lesions, the symptoms made it appear that he was suffering from smallpox, one of the most dangerous potential weapons a bioterrorist could use. Had he contracted the deadly illness, and spread it across the country, or was he simply suffering from a bad case of chicken pox? If needed, was Utah ready to prevent an outbreak? Or could the man's illness lead to the deaths of thousands across the country?

Answers to these questions can be found in the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) documentary-style program, "Battling Back: Taking on Bioterrorism in Utah." The one-hour program will air on July 10 at 10 a.m. on KSL Channel 5 and will also be broadcast on KUPN on July 13 and 19 at 9 p.m. In addition, it will be available on KSL.com and on Comcast's video on demand for one month beginning on July 11.

The hour-long program is hosted by former local talent and past CBS Morning Show anchor Jane Clayson. The video includes interviews with state and local officials discussing how Utah has prepared to anticipate, recognize, prepare for and prevent outbreaks caused by terrorists or natural epidemics. The program uses real-life examples of how disease scares were handled in Utah such as the possible smallpox case at Pioneer Valley Hospital and a rare case of botulism that took the lives of two elderly people in Cedar City, Utah.

In addition, the program shows what the public can do to prepare for all kinds of emergencies. "What a family can do to prepare for a bioterrorist attack is really similar to any other disaster like an earthquake or a tornado, said Dr. Robert Rolfs, State Epidemiologist, UDOH.

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"You need to make sure you have a plan so your family knows what to do, how to talk to each other, where to meet and how to communicate."

"Most everyone is afraid of the unknown, and if you plan for these possible events, you can really get rid of a lot of that fear," said Dr. Patrick Luedtke, Director, State Public Health Laboratories, UDOH.

In conjunction with the bioterrorism video, the UDOH has produced a free informational brochure, available at Utah's 12 local health departments and the UDOH. The brochure describes the symptoms of the six diseases that are the most dangerous in the hands of terrorists. The brochure also has a personal planning guide for families to organize emergency information.

Cody Craynor Risk Communication Coordinator and Jana Kettering Public Information Officer, UDOH were the program's executive producers. The program was written and produced by Janice Evans and Sam Prigg of White Rabbit Productions for the UDOH Bioterrorism Preparedness Program. For more information about bioterrorism in Utah, visit the UDOH's website at: www.health.utah.gov/bt. The program was produced with federal funds from provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cooperative Agreement on Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through: Preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; Assuring access to affordable, quality health care and; Promoting healthy lifestyles.